



# Project LAUNCH

# MCAH

## PROFILE



**P**roject LAUNCH (Linking Actions for Unmet Needs in Children's Health) is a national initiative that promotes the wellness of young children from birth to age 8 by addressing the physical, social, emotional, cognitive, and behavioral aspects of their development and supports care-givers to have the knowledge and resources they need to promote healthy development, identify early signs of emotional and behavioral challenges, and access services when

appropriate. The California Department of Public Health (CDPH), Maternal, Child and Adolescent Health (MCAH) is using Project LAUNCH funding to support the expansion of best practices in early childhood wellness promotion and prevention of mental, emotional and behavioral disorders by focusing on systems-level collaboration, improved coordination among child-serving organizations, and the integration of needed services and supports.

**OUR GOAL:** To replicate best practices in California counties to promote the health and wellness of children ages 0-8, their families and their communities so that abuse, neglect and trauma are prevented through early identification and appropriate referral.

**WE SERVE:** Over 1,000 children ages 0-8 and their families at risk of or who have experienced high levels of trauma. Counties participating are Nevada, Fresno and San Francisco.

**SERVICE DELIVERY:** Training and technical assistance necessary for counties to replicate these strategies successfully will be provided by Alameda County Public Health Department, CDPH's MCAH, First 5 Alameda, and the WestEd Center for Prevention

and Early Intervention. County MCAH programs will lead local partnerships to achieve project goals.

**OUTCOMES:** As a result of this project, it is expected that early childhood systems will be more integrated, home visitors and other practitioners will better meet the behavioral needs of their clients, and parent participants will learn how to address the physical, social, emotional, cognitive and behavioral needs of their children.

**FINANCING:** Project LAUNCH is a four-year grant through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, in partnership with the Health Resources and Services Administration, the Centers for Disease Control and the Administration of Children and Families.

## WHERE WE ARE

Counties implementing Project LAUNCH strategies are:

- ◆ Fresno County
- ◆ Nevada County
- ◆ San Francisco County

## LAUNCH TEAM

Assisting the counties is a team of experts from the following organizations: CDPH's California Home Visiting Program, Alameda County Public Health Department, First 5 Alameda County and WestEd Center for Prevention and Early Intervention.

## LAUNCH ACTIVITIES

- ◆ Community needs assessments
- ◆ Community-specific plans to implement the strategies
- ◆ Ongoing training and assistance by strategy experts
- ◆ The sharing of resources with all counties through a community of practice

## RESOURCES:

**California Home Visiting Program**  
<http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/mcah/Pages/HVP-HomePage.aspx>

**WestEd Center for Prevention and Early Intervention**  
<http://www.wested.org/program/center-for-prevention-early-intervention/>

**Alameda County Public Health**  
<http://www.acphd.org/>

**First 5 Alameda County**  
<http://www.first5alameda.org/>

## BACKGROUND

*Project LAUNCH in California*

In 2008, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) funded 55 sites, including MCAH, to promote the wellness of young children through systems integration strategies. In 2015, SAMHSA chose five of those sites to replicate innovative and promising practices. CDPH MCAH's original pilot in Alameda County was one of these five selected to replicate three of its successful strategies to promote the health and wellness of children 0-8, their families and their communities over the next four years. These three strategies are explained in the box below.

### **Long-term Strategy**

Although at least 1,000 people will be served by this grant, the focus is on changing early childhood systems so that countless more will be positively impacted. The goal to change the way communities are doing business so that more children who are at risk of trauma are identified, assessed and referred to needed resources.



## MCAH PROJECT LAUNCH STRATEGIES

The Project LAUNCH team will pursue grant goals by replicating three proven strategies:

- ◆ **Mental Health Consultation Integration:** Public health agencies integrate highly skilled behavioral health professionals in the implementation of their home visiting programs. The model replicated by Project LAUNCH includes a mental health consultant who trains and supports home visitors to identify behavioral health needs and make effective referrals. The mental health consultant is part of the home visiting team, ensuring that staff are supported to address their clients' needs. An additional benefit of this strategy is support for home visitors who may be experiencing secondary trauma.
- ◆ **Parent Cafes:** Parent cafes are a community-based practice that brings parents together in small groups to strengthen their parenting skills. Parent cafes follow a fidelity model that includes trained facilitators and a pre-planned focused conversation framework. Cafes engage parents, build their protective factors, and promote individual self reflection and peer-to-peer learning. In addition, families develop relationships with their peers and service providers, and can be connected to needed resources. This practice is also a significant pathway for identifying and developing parent leaders.
- ◆ **Systems Integration:** Integrating early childhood systems at both the local and state levels to promote identification, referral, access to and engagement with needed resources is the third strategy of this project. This strategy focuses on working at both the local and state levels to make sure the systems that are supposed to be supporting children and families are coordinated and functioning together so that barriers are reduced, services are more accessible and more effective, and disparities are addressed. Project LAUNCH targets integrating systems that support families' successes in their home visiting program, including health, mental health, education and family support.

## CONTACT IN YOUR AREA:

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